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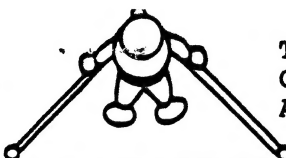
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MAY 29 - JUNE 4, 1989

**MATWATCH**

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## Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK: A FOND ADIEU

I always enjoy seeing anyone take a creative idea, nurture it to birth and steer it to success. Yes, for those of you who doubt, that includes Vince McMahon---who stands as a testimony that you can do most anything you try, despite odds being against you.

One little jewel of an idea passed away quietly over the weekend---and I, for one, am a bit maudlin.

I first met Joe Pedicino about ten months after he premiered PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK in Atlanta in the early spring of 1986. I remember seeing one of the first shows while visiting relatives. Joe had an on-set interview with Paul Orndorff, the week after he dramatically turned on Hulk Hogan. Here was Orndorff, outside the domicile of the WEF, telling his side of the story. I remarked how this show resembled a combination of 60 MINUTES, ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT and pro wrestling. I liked it---and, frankly---still in TV myself, was a bit envious I hadn't thought of it first.

The day I met Joe in his small trailer at WATL in Atlanta, he had just participated in a tome of graduate research for me on TV and wrestling, something we hope will eventually be published. Gordon Solie, his co-anchor and one of my idols, and the young line producers, Ken LaMorta and Tom Vardase, were running the place like a mini-newsroom. Suddenly, I was reminded of days a major story would turn a news day upside down when a call came through that Jim Crockett was buying the UWF from Bill Watts. The initial word was Crockett would maintain it and the NWA separately, feud the groups and climax with an annual SUPER BOWL OF WRESTLING. Well, some stories don't exactly pan out.

This was PWTW---which began national syndication in October 1986---at its classic best. A focused hour-long newsmagazine which covered virtually all of the major promotions and gave vignettes of information the very week after new angles and title changes occurred. Immediacy---that was the key, in my view, to its early success. Joe was Everyfan, in my view, and Gordon the Howard K. Smith (Cronkite never had a co-anchor) pre-eminent statesman. As a newsmag, I drank in every episode as if it were Hawaiian Punch Fruit Juicy Red.

I often told Joe I never felt the show was the same after Robert J. Syres bought PWTW. For financial reasons, Gordon was forced off the show and, though the angle which had Paul E. Dangerously buying "controlling interest" in PWTW and firing Solie is a collector's item, Gordon's replacement---Patrick Schaefer---was as awkward an addition to PWTW as Phyllis George once was

to the CBS MORNING NEWS. Schaefer was never a fun heel, only abrasive and clicked with Joe about like Warren did as deputy to Andy Taylor when Barney Fife left. I don't think the show ever totally recovered. Schaefer only lasted a few weeks and Joe brought his Atlanta SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING co-host, Boni Blackstone, to share the PWTW chores.

The show went to an "on the road" format and, while the locations allowed Joe and Boni to mingle on-site with more of the promotions' wrestlers, efficiency required they tape two weeks of shows at each locale. The intros had to be more generic, the highlights a bit more delayed and the immediacy factor was lost. Still, Joe and Boni worked hard at providing an around-the-nation look at pro wrestling and usually succeeded.

More than these factors, however, the realities of business in both TV syndication and wrestling have been more problematic for PWTW in the last year. So many independent stations are reducing their hours of wrestling that PWTW was forced off in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles and reduced to about 20 stations. Plus, independent promotions drastically declining since the 1986 premiere and with the death of NWA affiliations to regional territories, the variety of product has been diluted.

Pedicino's departure for Ted Turner's NWA in February was a signal in PWTW'S future wind. Boni and new co-host John Michaels have continued to produce a respectable product and the show had gained a weekly slot on FNN. But, faced with critical decisions concerning their SUPERSTARS outlet with the impending sale of WVEU in Atlanta to Home Shopping Network, Blackstone and Michaels made the decision to leave PWTW at the end of last week. Syres is said to be considering reformatting the show under a new title (Pedicino owns the PWTW name) in the fall with Schaefer as host.

The end of PWTW came quietly. No wrap party. No emotional farewells. No tears. My sadness in seeing it end is that it is the one show (the long-departed TNT aside) which broke the mold in pro wrestling presentation, yet maintained a respect for the genre. Simply stated, it was something different.

The Jim Ross-dubbed Round Mound of Sound once told me why PWTW meant so much to him. "It was my baby," Pedicino said. "It's the one thing I put together from scratch and, win or lose, it had my personal stamp on it." It did, indeed, my friend---and one, when the ultimate volume of the modern era of pro wrestling is written, which should be remembered with great affection.

## THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

### WINDHAM SIGNS WITH TITAN; ROTUNDA EXPECTED CLOSE BEHIND

GREENWICH CT - Barry Windham, former NWA U.S. champion and former co-holder of the WWF tag team title, signed an agreement with Titan Sports last Wednesday and brother-in-law Mike Rotunda is expected to follow suit.

Windham, who left the WWF in a major dispute in early 1985, allegedly breached his NWA contract in March. Early reports had Windham's talks stalling but insiders tell MATWATCH the inking of Dusty Rhodes to a WWF deal last week (see story below) was a catalyst in the Windham signing.

Rotunda, who reportedly had angry words with NWA management in the last three weeks over an upcoming decrease in his push, did not show for NWA TV tapings Monday and Tuesday of last week. As late as Wednesday, however, NWA president Jack Petrik said, "Rotunda has a valid contract with us and is in the fold." But Rotunda, claiming the NWA was trying to get rid of his reported \$150,000 contract, was said to be close to joining Titan as of Friday.

The pair, who will probably not re-team, are expected on WWF TV tapings in June.

### DUSTY'S DEAL: BE NICE TO HIM AND MAYBE A MINOR LEAGUE

GREENWICH CT - Dusty Rhodes, with fresh WWF contract in hand, debuted with Titan Tuesday night of this week in Canada. Rhodes is wrestling Ted DiBiase in his first series and DiBiase, who left the old WWF in a dispute with Rhodes, is putting Rhodes over.

WWF owner Vince McMahon sent a memo to his wrestlers last week, stating he expected Rhodes to be treated with courtesy when he arrives. A number of former NWA stars, led by Tully Blanchard, Arn Anderson and DiBiase, are said to be distraught at Rhodes' signing, particularly after Rhodes told some of his PWG Florida wrestlers he expects to become a leading WWF booker within a year.

WWF events coordinators were also told not to schedule any television or radio interviews for Rhodes in their cities.

Though unconfirmed, sources say Rhodes has convinced WWF management he can help them "kill the NWA in the South" and has persuaded them to use his PWG group as a "minor league" feeder promotion, something McMahon has resisted in the past.

NWA officials would not comment on Rhodes' career move. But MATWATCH has been told former NWA owner Jim Crockett has expressed his belief to TBS officials that Rhodes will kill the NWA's Southern efforts.

## PINFALL PROFILE

If you haven't read THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES in other newsletters, you read them right. But it's like imagining Peter Pan as a character in WAR AND PEACE to picture Virgil Runnels as a regular on SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING.

Many of us are stunned at the apparent country store Vince McMahon appears to be giving Dusty Rhodes, if our information is correct. Ted DiBiase, the man who left the WWF after realizing he'd never be able to eclipse Rhodes on the merged 1987 NWA-WWF ladder, as Dusty's first WEF foil??? As Jed Clampett would exclaim, "The Dickens you say?"

The last quarter of this year is certainly going to test the accuracy of theories of hardcore NWA fans, newsletter readers and people who wearied of Dusty from 1986-88. With that body and at his age (44), I don't see it. But one has to remember: to legions of WEF followers who never sample the NWA, Dusty will be new goods. He'll bring that rap (I can hear it now: "I've got a flair for the funk.") and can't you imagine some of the segs he'll do with Brother Love? And some fans who don't know his track record may buy him. Plus, the man is filled with a bitter desire to destroy those (TBS) he is convinced wronged him when he was fired as NWA booker. And while revenge is rarely the motivator to bring long-term success, it can do damage---in this case---at a time when the NWA is trying desperately to rebuild its house.

Despite the recent denials, the Barry Windham move was inevitable. This may be one of the earliest tests of Jim Ross's ability to create a new star in the fashion of the young stud Windhamesque heel. The Mike Rotunda defection is not that big of a factor, in that Mike has never had a strong ring persona or interview talent. Some NWA insiders say they're glad to be rid of the twosome because of their alleged internal troublemaking in recent weeks. But other analysts say it does hurt in the public image of those who follow both groups in that "the NWA's lost two more to Vince."

I think Rhodes is full of himself to believe he's going to ever become WEF booker, unless he retires from the ring. However, I can't see McMahon ceding that role to Dusty under any circumstances, can you? But then, I never pictured Dusty in Connecticut at all. For everyone saying, "Oh, no," at Dusty's ticket in, one has to remember, Vince McMahon has made very, very few mistakes since 1986. I'll tell you this: Rhodes-McMahon will be a marriage watched as closely as any since Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Of course, we know how that one ended up---twice.

A quick update: Jerry Jarrett has now rejected a bid to return the CWA show to FNN/SCORE. Jarrett is reportedly still angry over not being paid for his wrestlers' participation in the December FNN/Verne Gagne SUPER CLASH III pay show.

SCORE's Danny Wolf told MATWATCH Angelo Savoldi's ICW now goes weekly at 10:30 p.m. Saturdays. Negotiations continue for either Portland or Stampede for a 4 p.m. slot.

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SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent  
POWERSLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB  
- Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(SCW) - REVERSE CAGE MATCH: Joel Deaton wins when Samuel Kent slips him a whip and he lashes Tommy Rich; Deaton d. Chic Donovan using Knucks; Steve Prichard d. Rich when Kent distracts Mr. Donnie during ref bump and dumps Prichard on Rich; Dino Minnelli/Steve Lawler d. Ga. Power. RESTHOLD.

(WCCW) - Buddy Roberts d. Tony Falk; Mils Mascaras d. El Grande Coloso; Jeff Jarrett d. Tim Brooks; TORNADO MATCH: Chris Adams/J.J. Funk no contest vs. Iceman Parsons/Brickhouse Brown. ANGLE: Frank Dusek reinstated. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PMTW) - Final show. See story on page 1.

(ACW) - Sam Houston d. Larry Stephens; M.O.D. Squad d. Tommy Angel/Ricky Nelson; Ken Shamrock (debut) d. Brian Johnson; Nelson Royal d. Iron Horse; Colt Steel wins DQ over David Isley when Don Kernodle runs in but Black Panthers come from dressing room and a pullapart begins; Robert Gibson d. Brad Anderson; Nikita Koloff d. The Raven. BOMB-PLUS.

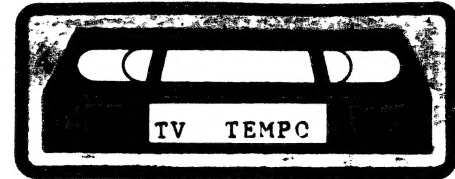
(WEF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Dino Bravo d. Scott Coulton; Foghorn Leghorn d. Brooklyn Brawler; Warlord d. Paul Roma; Ruckers-Rougeaus w. Rougeaus bashing Sean Michaels before match; Curt Hennig d. Jim Powers; FEATURES: King Duggan coronation, BRO. LOVE w. Jake Roberts; TONY SCHIAVONE'S VIDEO SPOT: Tully & Arn d. Rick Martel/Tito Santana. RESTHOLD.

(WEF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Roberts d. Tom Burton; John Studd d. Stoney Burke; Twin Towers d. Red Tyler/Mike Thomas; Foghorn d. Tom Stone; Hennig d. Frank DeFalco; Hillbilly Jim d. Chris Curtis; 4 NO HOLDS clips. BOMB. [SPOTLIGHT]: Rick Rude d. Jim Evans; Tito Santana d. Stone; Sheepwackers d. Chris Curtis/Barry Horowitz; Foghorn d. Brawler; BRO. LOVE w. Jake. BOMB-PLUS. [SUPERSTARS]: Koko B. Ware d. Black Knight; Ted DiBiase d. Coulton; Bret Hart d. Randy Spear; Bravo d. Warren Branch; Demolition d. Stone/Thomas. 4 NO HOLDS clips. BRO. LOVE w. Zeus. BOMB-PLUS.

(WEF/SNME) - I-C TITLE: Jim Duggan d. Rude by countout but Rude keeps belt; Randy Savage d. Jim Neidhart; WWF TITLE (CAGE): Hulk Hogan d. Bubba Bossman; WWF TAG TITLE: Tully & Arn win DQ over Demolition, who keep belts; Jimmy Snuka d. Boris Zhukov. DRAW-PLUS.

(PMF) - Dustin Rhodes/Mike Graham d. Nick Busich/Ric Diamond; Larry Zbyszko d. Lou Perez; Southern Force d. Brett Sawyer/Bill Price; 6-MAN: Steve Keirn/Nasty Boys d. Terminator/Al Perez/Brady Higgins; Jomo Kenya d. El Cid; ARENA: Dusty Rhodes-Steelman match ends in PMF belt being held up. RESTHOLD.

(CWA) - Dutch Mantel d. Mike Masters in 2-of-3 fall match where Mantel spots Masters first fall; Billy



Travis/Jeff Jarrett d. Hangman/Grappler; P.Y. Chu Hi/Shogun d. Chris Frazier/Alan Reynolds; Action Jackson d. The Shadow; Wild Side d. Frankie Lancaster/Darrin Carp; ARENA: Jackson d. Robert Fuller. ANGLE: Mantel, Travis brawl before Eddie Marlin separates. VIDEOS: Sylvia, Jerry Lawler/Austin Idol. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [MAIN EVENT A.M.]: Terry Funk d. Brad Armstrong; WW'89 CLIPS: Flair-Steamboat, Road Warriors-Varsity Club; Dynamic Dudes d. Jack Victory/Enforcer. DRAW-PLUS.

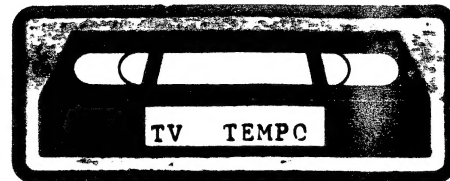
[WCW]: Funk d. Davey Rich; JAPANESE TORTURE MATCH: Great Muta d. Cougar Jay/Trent Knight/Mike Justice; Scott Steiner d. Victory; WORLD TAG TOURNEY: Samoan Swat Team d. Ranger Ross/Ron Simmons when Theodore R. Long lures Simmons away from ring; ARENA: Road Warriors-SST ends in double countout and major brawl. FEATURE: Dr. Joe Estwanik says Ric Flair has ruptured a disc in neck. POWERSLAM.

[NWE PM]: Muta d. Ricky Santana; Bill Irwin d. Keith Hart; Dudes d. South/Knight; Lance says Dr. Death injured in Japan by Terry Gordy in thug attack.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: SST d. Justice/Bucky Siegler; Butch Reed d. Randy Rose; Michael Hayes d. Steiner with feet on ropes; Simmons d. Troy Aldridge; HANDICAP: Muta d. Knight & Jay; REPLAYS: Freebirds-Road Warriors when RMs counted out from run-in by SST; Funk-Armstrong. PEDICINO'S NOSE (both shows): Joe predicts Flair may have to retire and accuses Paul E. & Hayes of conspiring to cause Warriors' loss. DRAW. [NWA PRO]: Hayes d. Jim Evans; Dudes d. Knight/Lee Scott; Bob Orton d. Ranger Ross and gets jumped by Dick Murdoch afterward; Steiner d. Aldridge; VIDEO: Brian Pillman. REPLAY: Freebirds-Warriors. ANGLE: Dwayne Bruce says Funk should be #1 NWA contender but Terry piledrives him anyway, saying, "Flattery will get you nowhere." DRAW-PLUS.

(AWA) - Scott Norton d. Tom Stone; Greg Gagne d. Tony Leone; Destruction Crew d. Jake Millman/Steve Butler; Tommy Jammer/Derrick Dukes d. Badd Company when Pat Tanaka hits Paul Diamond. Paul walks away from Pat; REPLAY: Ken Patera-Wayne Bloom carlift. CLASSIC: Scott Hall d. Michael Hayes by DQ. RESTHOLD. (CNF) - Ricky & Todd Morton d. Lou Fabiano/Clarence Jackson. Ricky tosses Tom Prichard in but Botswana Beast attacks and splashes Ricky's back; Stomper Harris d. Matthew Burns; Adrian Street/Bill Dundee d. Don Sanders & Russian Destroyer; Japanese Connection d. Danny Davis/Jackie Fulton when Kevin Dillinger distracts Davis and Mike Davis hits Fulton with branding iron. During melee, Beast splashes Danny. VIDEOS: Dundee, Mongolian Stomper, Beauty & the Beast. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - Joey Jackson d. Carl Stiles by DQ; Scotty the Body d. Top Gun using trunks but Gun beats on Scotty post-match and counts his own pin; Steve Doll d.



Jonathan Boyd; Scott Peterson gets 5 min. w. Scotty but Boyd & Buddy Rose run in and put dress & lipstick on Peterson; Beetlejuice double countout vs. Al Madril; Word the Barbarian vs. Midnight Soldier no decision and ends in 14-man brawl. ROSE GARDEN: Stiles brings note to Scotty's valet, Ginger, telling her she "smells better than Mom's cherry pie. Stiles also brought her flowers, which Scotty crushed. OTHER ANGLES: Stiles tries to pull Grappler's towel off head but Grap hides behind Ginger; Grappler appears with "Unknown Comic" type mask and Stiles chases him away; Word removes Soldier's mask but Soldier has on Grappler's old mask underneath. NEXT WEEK: "retirement" party for Billy Jack Haynes, who apologizes for competing with Don Owen. POWERSLAM.

**LINE OF THE WEEK** - 1. Diamond Doll, PMF, to Gordon Solie: "So, you're Flash Gordon, huh?" 2. Solie, PMF: "I guess I better wipe this lipstick off before I get home." 3. Paul E. Dangerously, WWW: "If the Road Warriors come from the street, where does their mama come from?" 4. Hawk, WWW: "We weren't fortunate enough to know who our mothers were. But since the Samoans wear skirts---heaven forbid, they could be our mothers." 5. Jim Cornette, WCM: "You don't have to squeeze it (WCM) between THE NEW LEAVE IT TO BEAVER and FISHIN' WITH ORLANDO WILSON." 6. Bobby Heenan, PTW, on Schiavone: "He comes out in his \$49 WWF blazer. The nicer they are, the quicker you dust 'em off." 7. Heenan & Gorilla Monsoon, PTW: GM, "Do you know what a vendetta is, Brain? BH, "The Vendettas are cousins of the Rosattis, aren't they?" 8. Ronald V. Gossett IV, CWA: "Quick, Tojo, my digitalis!" (Gossett puts cough drop under tongue); 9. Teddy Long, NWA, to Russell & Caudle: "The next time you guys go by the Salvation Army and buy a suit, how about getting your size?" 10. Michael Hayes, NWA: "I unwrapped the Total Package." 11. Johnny Valiant, AWA: "They (Milliman & Butler) sound like two waiters at LaGuardia Airport." 12. Cornette, CMF: "When we hit you, if you don't go down, you'll do some awful funny things standing up." 13. Vince McMahon, WEF: "Poetry in motion? You were more like molasses in motion, Jesse." 14. Jesse Ventura, SNME: "The Bossman must feel right at home inside the bars." 15. McMahon, SNME: "Boris trying to sing is just like watching hair trying to grow on your head, Jesse. Nothing happening." 16. Long, WWW: "I'd like to send Ric Flair flowers but then, again, I'm unemployed." 17. Paul E., NME: "The DOODS, man...Kovabunga...hey, you wanna throw a frisbee?" 18. Lance Russell, NME: "Paul, all your taste is in your mouth." 19. Dallas Page & Flash Gordon, PMF: DP, "Haven't these people heard Moscow & Russia are working hand in hand." FG, "Moscow & Russia have always worked hand in hand." 20. Page, PMF: "Dustin's getting good with that elbow. Dusty must have practiced on him in the crib...boing, boing, boing." 21. Dutch Mantel, CMF: "Last time I was in Florida, Terry Funk popped off at me at Disney World and I beat him right in front of Space Mountain." 22. Tom Prichard, CMF, on Street/Dundee & Miss Linda: "It's more like Peter Pan, Tinker Bell & Wendy." 23. Frank

Dusek, WCCW: "I'M REINSTATED!" 24. Carl Stiles, Portland, to Ginger: "I don't know why you're with Scott. Everyone knows he's full of snot."

**STRONGEST COMMENTS** - 1. Michael Hayes, WCM: "Luger's so boring, you have to have a cup of coffee to get energized to listen to him." 2. Paul E., NWA, to Road Warriors: "I'm mad because you lost your stinkin' guts." 3. McMahon & David Letterman, LATE NIGHT: DL, "Vince, you got weights for Christmas." VM, "You didn't."

**QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK** - 1. McMahon, SNME: "Have you ever seen Virgil smile before, Jesse?" 2. Charlie Platt, CMF: "Mr. Prichard, do you have any eyes in the back of all that hair on your head?" 3. Jim Ross, on Teddy Long's discussion with Simmons: "What's he asking for, an autograph?" 4. Letterman, LATE NIGHT: "Am I talking more than you, Vince?"

**BEST PICTURES** - 1. NBC, Demolition vs. Tully & Arn match. 2. NWA, Muta's aerials. 3. TBS, Ranger Ross slapping paper out of Long's hand. 4. NBC, Closeup of Rick Rude kiss. 5. WCCW, Frank Dusek kissing Bob Von Gerske.

**NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK** - 1. "King of the Buffet Circuit," given to Action Jackson by Ronald Gossett. 2. "The Eggbeaters," given to T&A by Demolition.

**BEST COMMERCIALS** - 1. New WRESTLING HOTLINE spot, TBS. 2. LITE-A-MANIA, NBC.

**PASSWORDS OF THE WEEK** - 1. "Premeditatedly," by Jim Ross. 2. "Confrontate," by Jesse Ventura.

**ALL-CLICHE TEAM** - 1. Jim Powell, SCW: "This was a travesty of justice." 2. Hayes, WCM: "Picture is worth 1000 words." 3. McMahon, SNME: "...sight for sore eyes." 4. Ventura, SNME: "...it ain't over 'til it's over."

**BLOOPER AWARDS** - 1. CMF, Randy Hales (in Dundee video) in dressing room with faces right after bringing out Botswana Beast to splash Morton. 2. CMF, for passing off the old USA tag belts as the CMF belts.

**BOD AWARD** - Bob Orton, NWA, for refusing to do job at TV taping.

Most of CLASH VII card (TBS, June 14): Steamboat vs. Funk; semis & finals of world tag tourney; Sting vs. Bill Irwin; Steiner Bros. vs. Sullivan & probably Spivey; Williams vs. Gordy; Norman vs. Steve Casey; Ranger Ross vs. The Terrorist; plus premieres of The Ebony Experience (Simmons & Reed) and The Dingdongs (you've got me)...That CLASH will run 3 hours from 8:05-11:05 p.m....Demolition vs. Tully & Arn was the highlight of SNME for me but those pre-commercial break incidents (Haku appearing in opener) are getting too predictable.

# COMINGS & GOINGS

**WHAT PMTW?:** PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK syndicator Bob Syres sent a fax announcing that the "international" version of PMTW will continue on FNN/SCORE through the summer. SCORE officials say they have no plans for it and others aren't sure where Syres will get clips.

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT:** The "big announcement" turned out to be no announcement from Ted Turner. TBS is working on a deal for some overseas cards but nothing major at the National Cable TV Association convention in Texas. They tried one more time for Roddy Piper after the April 2 show but Piper did not want to wrestle enough, in TBS' view, for the money offered.

**RATINGS RAP:** WEF drew a 9.4 on 247 stations for the week ending May 7. No figures on the NWA but our guess is it rated below a 4.9, which is what the #15 show in the Nielsen weekly top 15 syndicated ratings, **THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL**, tallied. This has to be a major disappointment for Turner because the syndie shows have been as entertaining as ever and the ratings keep tumbling.

**NO SLAMMYS:** NBC and the WEF have reached a mutual agreement not to produce the SLAMMYS, which was scheduled its first network airing this season. As a tradeoff, the WEF gets a July 22 SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT, its first ever in summer. Guess who has a PPV the next night.

**MORE FLICKS:** Superstar Billy Graham is appearing in the new film **FISTFIGHTER**. I'm told his dialogue includes 40 lines of "That's right, bruh-thuh."

**DEATON'S BELT:** Joel Deaton defeated David Sammartino for the SCW Southern title May 21 in Griffin GA. Two hours of TV were taped and Tommy Rich reverted to babyface in the first hour after an attack during a "reverse cage match," where the object was to be the last to escape. Ron Starr has already left the group.

**WHEELING & DEALING:** The SCW shows were again taped at a Ford car lot and drew 2,500---all freebies. I don't like that precedent because it cheapens the show by making it overly commercial but dealer Bill Walker doesn't mind. He says he sold 28 cars during the show.

**TONY TIME:** If you saw PRIME TIME last week, you know Tony Schiavone now has a weekly slot highlighting COLISEUM VIDEO releases. Wouldn't surprise me to see Tony eventually take the anchor chair for PTW.

**COORS ON TAP:** Coors has bought a substantial sponsorship in the remaining CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS specials for 1989 and you'll again see their logo on the ringposts June 14.

**INSIDE SECRETS:** Let me recommend Dennis Brent's INSIDE SECRETS booklet on how to begin a career in pro wrestling. The first in the series, which sells for \$12.95, is out and contains the names of all wrestling schools, alliances and potential jobs both in and out of the ring. Write to PRO WRESTLING CAREER BOOK, P.O. Box 796488, Dallas TX, 75379-6488.

**MICHAEL'S BACK:** Look for a return to the NCM color mike by Michael Hayes when the show reverts to a 2-hour format, particularly during ratings sweep periods.

**WHEEL OF THE COWBOY:** A good source has told us Cowboy Bill Watts is now acting as a consultant to Merv Griffin's planned venture into pro wrestling. What has me curious is this venture has been very quiet since its first rumors about eight months ago. And with Merv's money and showmanship, that could mean something interesting ahead.

**COPYING VINCE:** Qintex Entertainment, which is syndicating an updated RollerGames this fall, is trying to sell a series of roller specials to NBC, a la Vince's SNME shows.

**NO DOLL:** Bill Connell and Baby Doll Nicola Roberts have both reportedly been bounced as co-hosts of ATLANTIC COAST WRESTLING. MATWATCH has been told too many alleged off-color remarks by the pair have had to be edited from the tapes. Gene Ligon will be a replacement.

**NO SHARE:** Don't hold your breath on that sharing agreement between ACW and Jerry Blackwell's SCW. Nelson Royal's people haven't been able to contact Blackwell. Of course, if you try before 4 p.m., it's a wake-up call for Jerry.

**NO TERRY:** Terry Funk did not work Saturday night's St. Petersburg show against Dusty Rhodes, which had been plugged for weeks. Funk reportedly had planned to do the spot but withdrew because it would have meant putting over a soon-to-be WEF wrestler.

**THANKS, JOHN:** A great big thanks to John Lanigan for a national plug for MATWATCH on a recent SPORTS BYLINE radio show. Also, to Louis Charlip for the wrestling music videos from THE GEORGE MICHAEL SPORTS MACHINE.

**JOHNSTOWN BRAWL:** John was on hand for the recent Midnight Express DQ win over Badd Company in Johnstown PA. Jim Cornette was said to be furious at a false TORONTO STAR column which suggested he & Bobby Eaton & Stan Lane had been working "for \$10,000 a year" for the NWA.

**CORNETTE'S CASE:** Speaking of the Midnights, that Beckley WV lawsuit against the Express, Cornette, Jim Crockett Promotions and a security agency has now been appealed to a higher court. Crockett's insurance company offered a \$110,000 settlement to 63-year-old Roy Massey, which Massey rejected, for an alleged incident at a 1987 show. But the judge removed Crockett as a party in the case and we're told it may be early next year before the next day in court.

**CROWD CONTROL:** Richmond Coliseum officials, frustrated at the 1,006 turnout for the May 21 NWA card, are said to be on the verge of trying to swing an



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exclusive arena deal with Titan. The NWA is said to be in danger of losing its spot with the Baltimore Arena, as well---but has just signed a deal with Philadelphia's Spectrum.

**ONE STEP AHEAD:** TBS has hired Len Zegal (spelling may be incorrect) to handle syndication of NWA wrestling. Turner renewed ten stations and added three new markets in the last week.

**ANOTHER BLOW:** Eddie Gilbert damaged a knee last Tuesday night in Asheville NC. He's now in a cast and says he'll be back in 3 weeks but others who have seen it say he may be out until July. With Rick Steiner apparently ready to go this week, expect the Steiner Brothers to team.

**MORE PERSONNEL:** Expect Bob Orton to be phased out of the NWA. He refused to do a job at the last CENTER STAGE taping and that didn't set well. Cornette & the Midnighters got a big pop on their return. Sid Eudy, in a tryout, probably earned himself a job and Bill Irwin had a dark match audition.

**FUNK & STING:** The Funk-Sting angles done this past week were among the hottest of the year. One of their on-the-road brawls nearly started a riot.

**FRANCES' BACK:** Frances Crockett, reasoning a back ailment, is out of the NWA office for at least 3 to 4 months but others do not expect her back at all. PRO WRESTLING DIGEST's Dennis Brent was brought in last week to do the third issue of NWA WRESTLING WRAPUP.

**NO CMF TAPE:** CMF made a decision to a Best Of... show to air next weekend. The next CMF tape date is June 3 in Dothan.

#### ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

For our double issue first anniversary issue, which will be mailed June 26, I'd like to answer your key questions as if we were in a one-on-one conversation. Things you want to know about how MATWATCH is put together, key issues in pro wrestling today and analysis of the future of the unique marriage of TV and the ring.

I ask that you stay away from trivial (the "is Randy married to Liz" type) matters. But please, send your questions to me within the next two weeks so we can include as many as possible in the issue.

#### CABLE RATINGS RAP

Week Ending May 22	Rtg	Shr	Hi/Low
WEF ALL-AM (USA 5/21)	2.9	9.4	1.33 mil.
WEF PTW (USA 5/22)	2.9	4.4	1.33 mil.
NWA NCW (TBS 5/20)	2.3	4.5	1.16 mil.
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 5/21)	2.0	4.8	968,000
NWA MAIN EVENT AM (TBS 5/20)	0.7	6.3	337,000

(ANALYSIS: The two WEF shows virtually held steady, particularly PTW, in the face of the tough I KNOW MY FIRST NAME IS STEVEN on NBC. But the ironic note is the NWA's resurgence to a 2.3 with a 10:45 start, delayed an hour by the 13-inning Braves loss. My only surmial is a lot of people wanted to see that Freebirds-Road Warriors match. I'd have liked to have seen its rating if that show had started at 6:05. MAIN EVENT's overall numbers continue trending downward but still up 11% over the week before.)

#### MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

As of midweek, we rose slightly to 482 in our drive to hit 500 subscribers. Our campaign is for the 500th subscriber to receive a free 8-issue set (or if it is a gift subscription, the GIVER receives the free two months).

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